CHAPTER II

ANIMALS

CARNIVOROUS ANIMALS

136 Various animals live on the pastures visited by the Rwala.

The *fahad*, panther, is found particularly on the uplands to the northeast of the depression on Sirḥân as well as in the environs of al-Ḥazel.

The *kurṭa* is a beast of prey similar to the wildcat, only larger, dark yellow in color, with cropped ears ending with a tuft of long straight hairs. It lives in the territories of al-Ḥeǧera and al-Labbe. It lies in wait for gazelles and is fond of hiding itself in the dry annuals, *al-ḥemri*. The breeze blows the hairs on its ears as it moves the annuals; the gazelles are thus misled and approach it, whereupon it leaps on to their backs, thrusts its claws into their throats, and sucks their blood.

The *ẓab'a*, hyena, dwells in large numbers in dens on the aṭ-Ṭawîl range. By day it is timid, but by night it infests the whole territory, opens graves, devours corpses, attacks wounded or ailing camels, and even preys on crying babies. 224 It has three or four cubs. If the Bedouins observe its fresh spoor near a den, they surround the den, bring a long rope, make a noose in it, and send one of their number after the hyena. The hunter slips the noose on his left arm, crawls along on his stomach, draws the rope after him, and gropes cautiously on all sides searching for the beast. As soon as he catches hold of it, he shouts: "It isn't here, this isn't it! isn't here! I have found a piece of old sheepskin, but it isn't here!" In the meanwhile he slips the noose round the hyena's neck and crawls out. At a given sign his comrades draw the hyena 262 out, kill it, and eat its flesh. The flesh of the young hyenas, about six months old, who are living with their mother, is 825 particularly appetizing. The teeth of the hyena, hung round 751 the neck, protect children against various diseases. The gall of 278 the hyena, when mixed with water and taken as a drink, 757 assuages fever.

136 The *'aḳâb*, eagle. Not even a *bâšeḳ*, nor a *ǧeleme*, nor the falcon itself is safe from the *'aḳejb al-ǧerdân* species.

223 825 757 The *nisr* (pl., *nsûr*), vulture, especially the *ḥabaši* species, is shot and eaten, for its flesh is healthful. Seven pieces of its flesh dried in the sun are the best remedy for rheumatism and hemorrhoids. The patient should eat these seven pieces at once, cover himself with seven quilts, and sweat, and Allâh will help him.

136 825 The *raḫama* (*Vultur perenopterus*) migrates at the beginning of the autumn rains and does not return until the beginning of the *smâk* season. The Bedouins greet its return with joy, for they know that within ten or fifteen days there will be warmer weather. The *raḫama* is unwilling to give up its booty and exerts all its strength to get possession of it. Hence the saying: "So and so craves for something like a *raḫama*. *twaḫḫam twaḫmet ar-raḫama*."

The *sa'adi* or *abu sa'ad* is the stork.

The *ṛarḳ* is a water bird.

The *ṛurâb*, raven, is found in three varieties: the *zâṛ al-baḳ'*, the smallest, is black with a bluish or greenish luster on its chest; the *ǧab'a*, somewhat larger, has a short tail and very tasty flesh; the *ṛurâb al-'aḳ'aḳ* is the largest. All three species accompany the camels far into the desert and from them they pick ticks, *ḳarâd*, and the larvae of the gadfly, *ḥeleme*; but they also gnaw at the blisters under the saddle, and for this reason the herdsmen drive them away. If they see a raven settling on a camel, they call to it: "Fly away into the inhabited regions! *ṛarreb ṛarreb*." Or: "Beware of the awl! The awl will prick thy throat! *mḫejriz jibeṭṭ leḥâtak*!"

777 825 If a man undertakes an important journey and observes a single raven, he laments: "Oh! weary with weeping is the eye of him whom a single raven has approached. *jâ ḳard al-'ejn min ǧâḥ al-ṛurâb wḥîd*." He knows that he will have bad luck, and therefore he will prefer to return. If, however, he sees two ravens, he exults: "Oh! blissful is the eye of him whom two ravens have approached. *jâ ḥaẓẓ al-'ejn min ǧansah al-ṛurâbên*."

539 825 The young ravens are more wary than the old ones. An ancient raven was giving instruction to its great-grandson: "My son, do not trust people. If thou perceivest a man approaching thee, fly away as soon as he bends down. He might

2;Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

are always led by their mother, while their father walks behind them and protects them from wolves, hyenas, and *nsûr*. The ostrich has very bad hearing; on the other hand its sight is excellent. It is easiest to hunt near its nest. When there is no wind the spoor of the ostrich is very plain in the sand. The hunter follows it, hides behind every shrub, crawls on his stomach, and so draws near to the bird. If the male observes from a distance any suspicious movement of the shrub or the hunter, it flees with the whole flock, which cannot be overtaken in the sand even by the swiftest horse. Near the nest the hunter can fire at the birds he is stalking. The fat of the ostrich, known as *zihem*, is a remedy for various diseases.

The *ḳandara* is a pinkish bird about the size of a hen. It flies badly and runs in a clumsy manner. It is found solely in the Nefûd, especially on the precipitous slopes of the pits.

The *ḳaṭra* is larger than the *ḥabâra*. It flies very little. If attacked by the falcon, it lies on its back and defends itself with its claws.

The *ṭarše* is a dark bird the size of a small duck. It lives only in pairs in al-Ḥamâd. It has no sense of hearing.

The *bawwa* is half the size of the *ḳandara*. Two varieties live in al-Ḥamâd, of which the darker and larger is the *kidri*.

The *ḳaṭa'*, sand grouse, is found in the interior of the desert only as long as the various natural reservoirs are filled with rain water. When these dry up, it migrates to the edge of the desert about a hundred kilometers distant from permanent water The *ḳaṭa'*, *ḥaǧal* (see next page), and the pigeon are the only birds which regularly drink water after sunrise and before sunset. The *ḳaṭa'* never lays eggs near a watering place, but in a remote valley covered with grass and bushes. It digs a tiny hole alongside a shrub, and the female lays three or four eggs, gray in color with dark spots, the size of a pigeon's egg. The birds leave their nests only when flying to the watering place; otherwise they always keep close by them. In such valleys there are usually at least a thousand nests. When the young are hatched they run about like countless tiny chickens and search for seeds. The *ḳaṭa'* never flies alone, but always in flocks. If the flock does not contain more than ten birds, it is known as *firs*; otherwise as *raff*. The Bedouins express surprise that the *ḳaṭa'*, when flying to a watering place — even though it may be a hundred kilometers

539* 825 dug dens for himself and his numerous family. To the rest of his subjects he said nothing. When he used to come from his work into the assembly, his whole forehead was gray with dust and clay. His companions asked him: "What makes thy forehead gray?" "Constant praying, during which I touch the earth as is prescribed." One day the guards who had been posted on the boundary came running up, shouting: "The Arabs are approaching with dogs and weapons." *Abu ḥamad* and his family at once hid themselves in the dens which had been prepared, so that none of them perished.

136 825 The Rwala divide serpents into *ḥajje* and *dâbb*, the former being any short snake and the latter any long serpent, irrespective of whether it is venomous or not. In poetry the latter appellation is always used for venomous serpents. Of the short serpents they are afraid of the viper, *efâ'i*, which is found in the rocky desert, as well as of the *batra* and the *ḥaẓaf*, which live in the sandy desert. The latter crawl out only by night. During the daytime they dig themselves into the sand, so that the tips of their heads alone project.

Of the long serpents the *ḥaniš* is particularly venomous. It is one meter long, covered with patches of color, and swims in pools of rain water.

[757 262] The skin shed by a serpent, *silb*, serves as a remedy for various diseases of the eye. The Rwala all eat the long serpents. The flesh of the short snakes they give to camels suffering from the disorder of the stomach known as *rošš* and from caries, *rasîs*.

The *ḥarḏawn*, chameleon, basks in sunny spots and nods its head at passers-by.

The *ab-aṭ-ṭhejḥ* is smaller than the *ḥarḏawn*. It lives exclusively in the Nefûd, where it hides in the sand, leaving its head alone uncovered.

[278] The *malas*, a reptile similar to the *ḥarḏawn*, is found likewise in the Nefûd. It is spotted with red and black patches. Its flesh dried in the sun and ground to powder is eaten by impotent old men.

The *solejmâni* (or *ǧlejmâni*) and the *ḥabananijje* are harmless lizards.

136 825 The *ba'erṣi* (or *brejṣi*) is a venomous lizard of the Nefûd. When a man is bitten by this lizard, he becomes very restless. He cannot remain in one place. If he is lying in the shade, he craves for the sun, and if he is carried into the

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

bân, must not be taken on a raid or war expedition, for her rider would come back without booty. 777

Should the raiders on their march against the enemy meet a flock of goats or sheep, they halt until the animals pass. If they rode through the flock, they would cause their own defeat, for the enemy would scatter them in the same manner as they had scattered the goats or sheep. Whoever sights a solitary white gazelle, *ẓebi*, must not mount his mare for some time, for she would stumble under him, *taḳanṭar* or *taḳanṭa'*, and he might hurt himself and thus meet with failure. A black dog, *mballam*, should be killed at sight, as the fiend is hidden in him and thus brings the Rwejli bad luck. The flesh of the wild swine which roam especially in the Sirḥân depression or, according to the Rwala, in al-Wâdi, is enjoyed by the Bedouins, who know nothing of permitted or forbidden food; pork fat they use in healing both wounded men and animals, but they hate to meet a wild swine when starting on a raid or on any other undertaking, because it brings bad luck. When a solitary raven or a *rḫama* vulture is seen flying above the raiders, they shoot at it, crying: "May Allâh destroy thee! *Sab'ek* (or *Sab'eč*)." They fear that if they did not kill the birds they would feast on the bodies of the fallen. If a raider's rein breaks, he should return at once. The commander of an expedition must also turn back if he seats himself on a saddle wet by rain. A broken rein means that the mare will run about freely after her rider has been thrown from the saddle, while a wet saddle reminds one of the commander's blood flowing down it. When a camel or a mare returns home stained with the blood of her slaughtered rider, she is generally sold to another clan or to the settlers, as the kin of the fallen man abhor riding an animal over which the blood of their kinsman has been spilled. 825 492 [262] [757] [761]

DREAMS AS OMENS

Much importance is attached by the Rwala to dreams. During sleep a man's soul moves among spiritual beings from whom it can learn all things hidden from men, whether of the past, of the present, or of the future. In most cases Allâh is appealed to by the Bedouins to send them dreams concerning their return from an important undertaking, *ḥelm m'dwdi*. Such dreams Allâh grants especially to the commanders of 787 721

CHAPTER XXIII

DEATH AND AFTER DEATH

DISEASES AND WOUNDS

165 Few Rwala reach a very old age. More than four-fifths of the men either fall in war or perish in consequence of wounds received,
164 while the women die mostly when suckling their babies. Such women as survive this period generally grow to be very old. From diseases the Rwala suffer chiefly in the months of July and August, when they camp in the neighborhood of Damascus, in al-Ruta, Gowlan, al-Mzerib, and Kerajat al-Meleh (the vicinity of Etra and Caf). Kerajat al-Meleh are notorious for their ague, hemma, and malaria, shune; in al-Guba the flies are a real pest; likewise the strong winds which blow there all the time, whirling up the fine sand and dust, are very injurious to the eyes. All these districts are called bilad mabijje by the Rwala, who therefore prefer to camp in either the Nefud or al-Hamad, where the atmosphere is both clear and salubrious, bilad 'adijje.

The following are the diseases most universally known.

164 Hubta: pains in the spine and the head combined with a strong
757 fever. The patient wants to lie only on the flat of his back. For a cure he is burnt with a red-hot iron about the head and temples. This occurs most frequently in winter.

Gederi: smallpox. Treated with red clay diluted in water, which is then poured into the patient's eyes. This disease breaks out towards the end of the sferi season (October--December).

Sarba: pains in the stomach combined with fever and endless thirst. Its cure: the root of the nose is cut through so that it bleeds profusely, and the shoulders are burnt all over. Sometimes a thick thread is pulled through the skin of the shoulder and left there until the wound suppurates. The disease appears in winter, especially after one drinks cold water.

Mwallje: pains in the intestines, accompanied by swelling; also the abdomen hardens. It is treated by laxatives;

2:Musil S-4, 5 (no date)1928 MD4 Rwala MD4

appears mostly in summer, eating of meat being most frequently the cause. 164 757

Ḥemma: ague. The cure: burning about the neck. Appears in midsummer.

Sḫûne: a violent fever; lasts two or three days, ceases for a while, and reappears in the months of July, August, and September. The cure: drinking tamarind water.

Ḥeben: ulcers. They are treated with poultices of the *ḥaltîta* and *mbâraka* drugs till the pus flows out.

Šoṭob: hemorrhoids. The cure: a piece of clay is kneaded, shaped like a large nail, allowed to dry, burned to a white heat, and then inserted into the rectum in order to burn out the hemorrhoids.

Riḥ: rheumatic pains, especially in the *ǯferi* season (October—December). The afflicted limb is burnt for a cure.

Ramad: diseases of the eye. The cure: *ḳoṣt al-eḫt* or *ḳaṭra* and *twejtijjân* drugs are bought, crushed, mixed with woman's milk, and applied to the eye.

Aba ẓhejr: pains in the small of the back compelling the afflicted person to walk with a stoop. It is treated with burning about the small of the back.

Sâbe': chronic fever combined with headache; otherwise the patient feels well but has no appetite, grows thin and weak, and finally dies. This is treated by burning from the nape of the neck across the top of the head down to the nose.

Ḥubejǧe: measles. The cure: dates mixed with pepper and butter warmed up and given the patient to eat. Occurs mostly in winter.

'Akankaš: eruption on parts of the body, with itching of the skin. This is treated by drinking the *ḥebbḥâr* and *ṭûm* drugs in milk. It occurs in the months of January and February.

'Anḳûd: a severe cough accompanied by vomiting, *jaǧdef*. As a cure the sick man drinks asses' milk. Occurs mostly in winter.

Aba waǧh: stiffness of some part of the face. As a cure they burn the corners of the mouth and stick three lead balls under the skin of the part of the face affected, which is then covered with a red cloth.

Lwêṛef: venereal disease. Cured by inhaling the smoke of some drug strewn over hot coals. It is very rare among the Rwala.

On falling sick a Rwejli instantly ties into his hair or 000

757 On falling sick a Rwejli instantly ties into his hair or to his head rope some red or green thread as a preventive, *heğâb*, against pain. If he gets worse and the home remedies will no longer suffice, his relatives send for a seer, *ṣâheb as-sirr*, entreating him to come and help the patient. A she-camel is promised to Allâh as a sacrifice for restoring health to their sick relative in these words: "O thou face of Allâh, if thou curest this man and liberatest him from the captivity of his disease, I will give thee this she-camel in sacrifice; *jâ waǧh allâh in ṭajjebt hal-walad w-fakkejteh min hal-maraz ilak hal-ǧezûr.*"

752 Fractures are healed by a Bedouin versed in the art. He sets the broken bone, lays the limb between narrow boards, and then packs it round with dough made of barley flour, salt, and eggs, or lacking these of tragacanth, *helbe*. This composition hardens like rock. After the expiration of twenty-five days the bandage is loosened but it is not removed until after forty days. During that time the patient must not eat anything sweet and is fed on meat only, or, if that cannot be had, on milk.

752 757 A small wound is called *ṣwâb*, a large one *ǧurḥ*. The wounded man, *ṣawîb*, is assigned a separate corner in the tent always on the windward side, so that no bad odor can reach him. Any scent, *rîḥa*, opens the wound anew, increasing the pain and swelling, *tirfer* or *tizerr*. Harmless are the odors of tar, *ḳuṭrân*, and the drugs of *ḥantîta*, *ǧawelijje*, *ebhel*, *se'ed*, *hawağawwa*, *'ûd al-hawa*, *ḍamm al-eḫwên*, the smoke from the camel manure, *ǧelle*, tobacco smoke, and sulphur. The wounded person stops his nose with the *ḳejṭarân* or *ḥantîta* drug as a protection against injurious odors. Also he must deny himself sweet dishes, which according to the local belief would cause the wound to fester, *jiddi*, still more. At first soap is applied to the wound, later the *subl* drug. The urine of little children, *bowl al-wurdân*, is used in cleaning wounds. [821] As the wound could not heal if reached by the light of stars, the couch of the wounded person is curtained on all sides by clothing and carpets, and he must not leave it even to satisfy his natural wants. If it is intended to camp in the same place for some length of time, a separate small tent is put up for the patient, closed on all sides, *heğra*, and at some distance 752 from the camp. Visitors sit round the tent and converse with 758 him, but no one will go inside except his nearest relative. For 831 there might be a visitor who, having just had sexual inter-